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published in
Journal of International Business Studies
2004

DOI (link to publisher)
10.1057/palgrave.jibs.8400090

document version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Journal of International Business Studies (2004) 35, 284–305

www.jibs.net

The impact of societal cultural values and individual social beliefs on the perceived effectiveness of managerial influence strategies: a meso approach

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Received: 13 May 2002
Revised: 15 December 2003
Accepted: 6 April 2004
Published online 24 June 2004

Abstract
This paper reports the findings of a 12-nation study designed to test empirically the relationships between societal cultural values, individual social beliefs, and the perceived effectiveness of different influence strategies. The relationships between three types of broad influence strategy (persuasive, assertive, and relationship based) and four dimensions of individual beliefs (cynicism, fate control, reward for application, and religiosity) were examined. Three of Project GLOBE's cultural values (in-group collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, and future orientation) were selected to investigate their direct effects on the rated effectiveness of influence strategies, and their possible interaction with dimensions of individual beliefs. Results showed that different dimensions of individual social beliefs predict the perceived effectiveness of the three types of influence strategy, and that cultural values can moderate the strength of the relationship between these dimensions of individual social beliefs and the perceived effectiveness of influence strategies.
Journal of International Business Studies (2004) **35,** 284–305.
doi:10.1057/palgrave.jibs.8400090

Keywords: social beliefs; cultural values; influence strategies

Introduction

Influence is often a key to managerial effectiveness (Yukl, 2002). Moreover, the effectiveness of global managers depends on their ability to exercise influence in culturally mixed interpersonal networks (Smith and Peterson, 1988). The factors affecting choices of influence strategy in different cultures are therefore of interest not only to academicians but also to managers working across cultures.

Cross-cultural studies of influence tactics (e.g., Hirokawa and Miyahara, 1986; Schermerhorn and Bond, 1991) have found that cultural values are associated with differences in preferences for the use of different influence tactics or strategies across cultures. For example, Schermerhorn and Bond (1991) found that Chinese and American managers demonstrated differences in the use of rational appeals when influencing both subordinates and superiors, and Zaidman and Drory (2001) found that cultural norms between two different populations could explain some of the differences in upward impression management. These studies, however, did not control other factors known to affect influence choices, such as the nature of the request, the direction of the influence attempt, the

power possessed by the agent, and the relationship between the agent and the target (Yukl, 2002).

One study that did control for such factors was by Fu and Yukl (2000), who found that Chinese managers rated coalition formation, upward appeal, giving gifts/favors, and personal appeals as more effective, and rational persuasion, consultation, and exchange as less effective than did American managers. Fu and Yukl pointed out that these preferences were consistent with the Chinese endorsement of collectivistic, feminine, long-term-oriented values and Americans' endorsement of equality, direct confrontation, and pragmatism. Similarly, a study by Ralston *et al* (2001) compared strategies of upward influence and found contrasting patterns across six cultures. Neither of these studies, however, included measures of cultural values. In addition, most studies in the literature have conducted *post hoc* analyses to identify differences in influence behavior.

The current study attempts to overcome some of these limitations. The main purposes of our study are:

(1) to investigate the effect of individual social beliefs on the perceived effectiveness of various influence strategies;
(2) to assess the relationship between national cultural values and perceived effectiveness of various influence strategies; and
(3) to examine the potential moderating effect of cultural values on the relationships between social beliefs and the effectiveness of different types of influence strategy.

In the following sections, we first briefly introduce the three bodies of literature (influence strategies, social beliefs, and cultural values) to provide a theoretical framework for our study. Then, we introduce the hypotheses to be tested, followed by the methods we used to test those hypotheses. Finally, we provide the results of the statistical analyses and discuss the implications of the findings.

Influence strategies, individual social beliefs, and societal cultural values

In recent years researchers have been urged to adopt a meso-level paradigm, linking macro and micro concepts to form integrated theories of organizations (Rousseau and House, 1994; House *et al*., 1995; Hackman, 2003). However, studies that empirically forge and confirm such links are few (see Smith and Bond, 2003). We attempt to explore this linkage, using cultural values as macro-level (societal) concepts and social beliefs as micro-level (individual) concepts. This process is similar to the interactional psychology perspective, in which both individual factors and contextual factors combine to influence behavior (O'Reilly *et al*., 1991).

Owing to the numerous, often confusing, definitions of the two constructs, the relationship between social beliefs and cultural values is hard to decipher. Beliefs represent an individual's perceptions of reality. Values are more stable, long-lasting beliefs about what is important (Sagie and Elizur, 1996). Individuals have both beliefs and values, but in our paper social beliefs refer to those held by individuals, whereas cultural values are defined as 'cultural criteria or evaluative standards for judgment', not motives, beliefs, or attitudes of the individuals (Hayden, 1988: 416). Cultural values are transcendental; beliefs can be specific to an activity or institution and, as such, are more directly related to behaviors. Therefore, although national cultural values have been the major factors in cross-cultural research, beliefs could sometimes be more useful than values in explaining cross-cultural differences in specific individual behaviors (Leung *et al*., 1995).

A likely reason why links between cultural values and individual influence behaviors have not been confirmed in previous studies is that individual variables show too much variation to be predicted from cultural values. Culture implies some level of shared meaning, of a commonality in the way in which behavior is evaluated. However, an individual's behavior at any given moment 'may or may not be congruent with 'shared' cultural meanings, and personal desires may be incompatible with cultural norms' (Rohner, 1984: 124). The beliefs held by individuals regardless of their cultural backgrounds might therefore be among other factors that affect behaviors more directly than cultural values.

The relationships among the three sets of variables in our study can be understood by the *theory of reasoned action* (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980; Ajzen, 1996), also termed the *Fishbein behavioral intentions model* or the *theory of planned behavior*, which argues that people consider the implications of their actions before they decide to engage or not engage in a given behavior. Its fundamental assumption is that any specific set of behaviors reflects not only the influence of underlying individual factors (i.e., traits and personality) but also the influence of

other external factors unique to the situation in question. When confronted with the need to decide on a course of action, people consider their beliefs about the likely consequences of available alternatives, beliefs about the normative expectations of important individuals or groups, and the required resources and potential impediments characterizing the world in which they function. These beliefs result, respectively, in the form of attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms with respect to the behavior, and perceived behavioral control, which in turn influence behavioral intentions and actual behavior.

The theory was chosen because of its proven validity in predicting various workplace behaviors and its applicability in both Western and Asian contexts (Sheppard *et al*., 1988; Ajzen, 1991, 1996). Applying this theory to the use of influence behavior, individuals' belief structures will lead people to perceive certain influence strategies as more likely to result in successful outcomes (e.g., the target complying with their request), thus making those strategies appear more effective and resulting in a positive attitude toward the use of those influence strategies. We argue that people's perceptions of the effectiveness of influence strategies are affected both by their framework of social beliefs (social cynicism, reward for application, fate control, religiosity, social complexity) and by the cultural milieu in which they function (uncertainty avoidance, in-group collectivism, future orientation). Graphically, the relationships among the three variables are as shown in Figure 1.

The following sections describe the three constructs and the connections among them.

Influence strategies and their perceived effectiveness

In all, 16 proactive tactics identified in previous studies of managerial influence tactics are included in this study. To facilitate the analyses, we grouped the 16 tactics into three broadly defined meta-categories: persuasive, assertive, and relationship based.[1] The persuasive and assertive strategies are based on previously identified dichotomies (e.g., 'hard' *vs* 'soft' by Sun and Bond, 2000). The relationship-based strategy was identified in the Fu and Yukl (2000) study. The three strategies are defined as follows:

(1) *Persuasive strategy* includes *rational persuasion* (using logical arguments and factual evidence to persuade the target), *inspirational appeal* (making an emotional appeal to the target's values or ideals), and *consultation* (seeking the target's input or participation in task). When influencing the target, the manager using this strategy focuses on the merits of the request, provides logical arguments, or connects the request to the larger good.

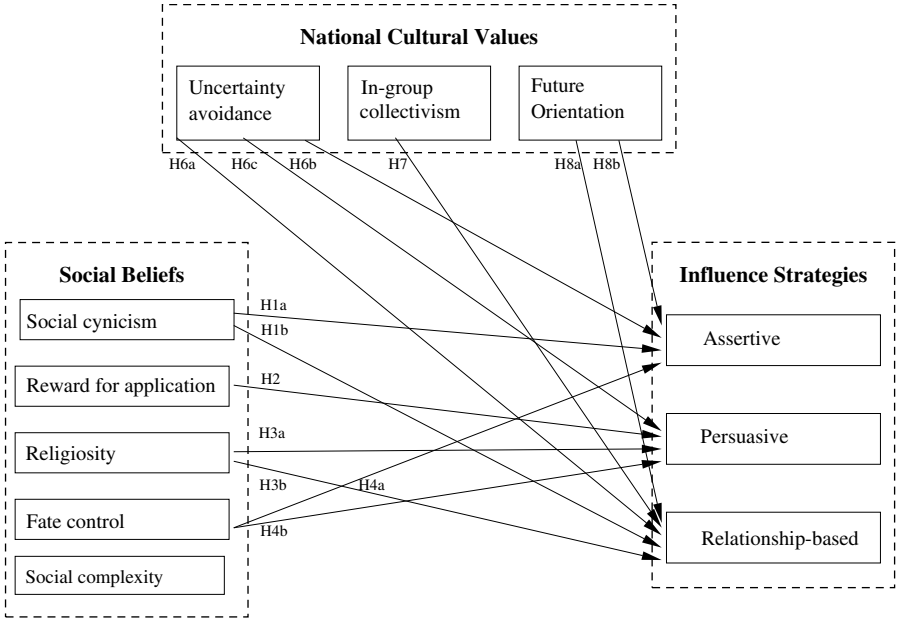

Figure 1 Model of the relationships among national cultural values, social beliefs, and influence strategies.

(2) *Assertive strategy* consists of *persistence* (repeated pleading with the target to carry out a request), *pressure* (using demands, threats, or persistent reminders to push the target), and *upward appeal* (seeking help from someone with higher authority). The manager, when applying this strategy, uses some form of coercion to influence the target.
(3) *Relationship-based strategy* includes *giving gifts* (offering gifts to the target), *informal engagement* (inviting the target to a non-work environment to make the request), *personal appeal* (asking the target to carry out a request as a personal favor), *socializing* (talking about a subject irrelevant to the request but of interest to the target before making the request), and *exchanging* (offering the target something in exchange for the help). With this strategy, the manager usually tries to use a positive social relationship or attempts to form one in order to influence the target.

Individuals hold beliefs about the relative effectiveness of these influence strategies. According to the theory of planned behavior and the expectancy-value framework, these beliefs and perceptions about the effectiveness of influence behavior can affect the frequency with which the behavior is used, as influence strategies perceived as less effective are less likely to be used.

Perceptions of the effectiveness of influence strategies may be universal or specific. Previous research (e.g., Kennedy *et al*., 2003; van Knippenberg and van Knippenberg, 2003) suggests that the persuasive strategy is used most frequently across cultures, and is considered the most effective by managers. In contrast, the assertive strategy is perceived as evoking resistance. Within this general framework, however, specific patterns of differences may occur across individuals and across cultures. Our contention is that the perceived effectiveness of influence strategies is affected both by micro-level variables (individual social beliefs) and by macro-level variables (national cultural values). The following subsections discuss these ideas in greater detail.

Social beliefs and their connection to the perceived effectiveness of influence strategies

Social beliefs are general beliefs at a high level of abstraction; they facilitate the attainment of important goals and help people understand the world. Based on empirical results from more than 40 countries, Leung and Bond (2004, in press) extended the results of the earlier Leung *et al* (2002) study and identified five dimensions – cynicism, reward for application, religiosity, fate control, and social complexity – as pan-cultural dimensions of belief that characterize individuals and relate to differences in individual behaviors. Leung and Bond (2004, in press) suggest that people across cultures form similar dimensions of social beliefs because they deal with similar problems. People in different cultures, however, may subscribe to these beliefs at differing levels based on the social logic developed over history by that particular cultural group. We adopted these dimensions because they are the only ones of this type, and capture the constructs of interest.

The five dimensions can be considered as part of an individual's cognitive framework, which affects the scripts that individuals use to guide behaviors in various situations (Fiske and Taylor, 1998). Perceived effectiveness or attitudes toward influence strategies can be considered as examples of such scripts. As mentioned earlier, the connections between these frameworks and influence scripts can be understood by the theory of planned behavior. In other words, individual belief structures will lead people to perceive certain influence strategies as more likely to result in successful outcomes: hence those strategies will be perceived as more effective. The connections between influence strategies and Leung and Bond's (2004, in press) social beliefs are discussed below.

Cynicism refers to a negative view of people – being motivated by considerations of power, a mistrust of social institutions, or negative stereotyping of certain groups. Managers endorsing cynicism are likely to have influence scripts consisting of aggressive and directive tactics. A negative view of human nature – similar to McGregor's (1960) Theory X – and a mistrust of social institutions are likely to be connected to beliefs that people are unlikely to change their behavior unless forced through pressure, demands, and threats. In addition, managers endorsing social cynicism are also likely to believe that manipulation can succeed, and might deliberately try to establish social relationships with targets and give gifts to targets so as to ensure compliance with their requests. Hence the expectancy-valence paradigm suggests that:

H1: Managers who endorse social cynicism are more likely to perceive (a) assertive and (b) relationship-based influence strategies as effective,

compared with managers who do not believe in social cynicism.

Reward for application refers to beliefs that effort and the investment of one's resources will lead to positive outcomes. Managers subscribing to such beliefs believe that motivation is sustained by attributing success to effort and by reinforcing effortful displays. Such individuals are less likely to seek help from powerful others in their influence attempts, and are more likely to believe that their own efforts, skills, and careful planning as demonstrated through well-worded logical arguments are likely to be influential. Here the expectancy-valence framework suggests that:

H2: Managers who believe in reward for application are more likely to perceive persuasive influence strategies as effective, compared with managers who do not believe in reward for application.

Religiosity refers to beliefs in the existence of supernatural factors and in the positive impact of religious institutions and practice on people's lives; it promotes benevolence in people's interactions with each other. Managers holding such beliefs may engage in more mutually beneficial social exchanges, score higher on agreeableness, and endorse humane leadership. Hence, the choice of influence strategies may be affected not only by the expectation that a particular strategy is likely to result in compliance by the target, but also by the expectation that the strategy will lead to benevolent and mutually beneficial outcomes. The persuasive and relationship-oriented strategies allow the target the freedom to choose whether or not to comply; they are perceived as relatively friendly and benevolent. Hence, managers endorsing higher levels of religiosity are more likely to endorse the persuasive and relationship-based strategies.

H3: Managers who believe in religiosity are more likely to perceive (a) persuasive and (b) relationship-based influence strategies as effective, compared with managers who do not believe in religiosity.

Fate control refers to the belief that events in life are both predictable and predetermined by fate and destiny (i.e., one has little control over events happening to oneself). Managers subscribing to such beliefs are likely to perceive themselves as controlled by external factors, and are less likely to believe in their own ability to influence others through logical arguments or consultation. Such managers may perceive that the only effective influence tactics are those that do not depend solely on their own efforts, but involve seeking help from others who have authority over the target. Thus the expectancy-valence framework suggests that:

H4: Managers who believe in fate control are more likely to perceive (a) assertive influence strategies as effective and (b) persuasive strategies as ineffective, compared with managers who do not believe in fate control.

Social complexity refers to the axiom that the social world is complex, and that the same rules of behavior do not necessarily apply across situations and across cultures. Managers holding such beliefs are less likely to favor any one type of influence strategy across all situations, and are more likely to perceive different types of influence strategy as effective under different contexts.

H5: Managers who believe in social complexity are less likely to perceive any type of influence strategy as effective, compared with managers who do not believe in social complexity.

National cultural values and the perceived effectiveness of influence strategies

As stated earlier, this paper takes a meso-level approach to the study of influence strategies. Therefore, in addition to examining individual-level determinants of influence, we also examine one country-level determinant: cultural values. Culture refers to a system of socially created and learned standards for perception, cognition, judgment, or behavior shared by members of a certain group; it is the collective programming that distinguishes one group or category of people from another (Hofstede, 1980). Since cultural congruence suggests that cultural forces affect the kind of influence strategy that is usually accepted and effective in a collectivity, behavior that is consistent with collective values will be more acceptable and effective than behavior that represents conflicting values.

National cultures can be assessed along many dimensions. The classic measures of national culture developed by Hofstede (1980) consisted of four dimensions: individualism *vs* collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity *vs* femininity. The GLOBE (House *et al*., 1999)

project operationalized nine cultural value dimensions.[2] We adopted the GLOBE measures because they are more recent, more comprehensive than Hofstede's, and assessed cultural *values* ('should be') separately from cultural *practices* ('as is'). The two are believed to be separate manifestations of culture. We selected three out of nine dimensions (uncertainty avoidance, in-group collectivism, and future orientation) based on theoretical support in the literature presented below.[3]

Uncertainty avoidance deals with the extent to which people feel the need to avoid ambiguous situations and manage such situations by providing explicit structure; it refers to people's acceptance of varying situational demands, their openness to change, and their propensity to take risks (Hofstede, 1980; House *et al*., 1999). In high uncertainty avoidance cultures, high levels of structure reduce people's confidence in influencing others through logical arguments or consultation, and thus make them less likely to perceive persuasive strategies as effective. On the other hand, managers in such cultures may perceive assertive influence strategy, such as seeking help from higher authorities, to be more effective than relying on their own efforts. In fact, Schmidt and Yeh (1992) found that managers in Taiwan and Japan (both high on uncertainty avoidance) preferred assertive strategies, whereas managers in low uncertainty avoidance Australia and US preferred persuasive strategies. Similarly, Hirokawa and Miyahara (1986) and Xin and Tsui (1996) found that assertive tactics such as coalition and upward appeal were rated higher by managers in China, a high uncertainty avoidance culture. Offermann and Hellmann (1997) found a significant positive correlation between Hofstede's uncertainty avoidance index and the use (reported by subordinates) of controlling behaviors by managers in 39 different countries.

H6: Managers in high uncertainty avoidance cultures are more likely to rate (a) the relationship based and (b) the assertive influence strategy as effective, and (c) the persuasive influence strategy as ineffective, than managers in low uncertainty avoidance cultures.

In-group collectivism suggests that, in certain cultures, people draw upon the 'we' identity and value group goals, collective needs, and emotional dependence on society. In such cultures managers are more likely to establish and focus on relationships with others, and these relationships serve as the basis for influencing others. In support of this assertion, House *et al* (1999) found that collectivism accounted for a significant variation in the endorsement of team-oriented leadership. Similarly, Ting-Toomey (1988) suggested that managers in collectivistic Japan were more likely to influence subordinates by appealing to their desire to be accepted by others (relationship-based strategies), whereas managers in the individualistic US were more likely to use reason (persuasive strategies).

H7: Managers in collectivistic cultures are more likely to rate relationship-based influence strategies as effective compared with managers in individualistic cultures.

Future orientation refers to the valuation of long-term results over short-term gratification. In such cultures greater attention is paid to developing people, building relationships, and sacrificing immediate profit in favor of long-term benefits. In contrast, past- and present-oriented cultures insist upon immediate returns on invested time and effort, tend to be more task-oriented, and have little patience with socializing in the work setting. These values suggest that people in future-oriented cultures may be more likely to emphasize relationships with others in the workplace, and to use those relationships as the basis of their influence strategies. Therefore, managers in such cultures are less likely to use pressure or other assertive tactics that might harm future relationships. In support of this notion, Fu and Yukl (2000) found that, in future-oriented China, managers preferred relationship-oriented tactics such as giving gifts and personal appeals, whereas managers in the short-term-oriented US preferred persuasive tactics such as rational persuasion and consultation.

H8: Managers in future-oriented cultures are more likely to rate (a) relationship-based strategies as effective and (b) assertive strategies as ineffective than managers in short-term-oriented cultures.

Interactions

Beliefs have been used mostly as a mediator between cultural values and attitudes in the literature. However, in our study, social beliefs and perceived effectiveness of influence strategies are both measured at the individual level, whereas cultural values are societal-level variables. Our approach is to look at the extent to which the individual-level relationships hold (or vary) across

cultures as a function of the societal-level variables. However, as cultural systems regulate individual behaviors in a society, it is possible that cultural values can influence individuals' cognitive representations. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the moderating effect of societal cultural values on the relationship between individuals' social beliefs and their perception of the effectiveness of influence strategies. Such an examination is also in line with the meso-level perspective taken in this study.

According to motivational theories, individuals are most likely to report higher levels of job satisfaction and commitment when they find the right fit between their personal interests and the nature of the job, between personality and organizational culture; and more positive attitudes are likely to be obtained when there is an affective fit between a team member and his or her group (e.g., O'Reilly *et al*., 1991). Following this rationale, we believe that people are likely to perceive a certain type of influence strategy to be more effective when their personal beliefs are consistent with the societal values. For example, when the society is high on uncertainty avoidance, the more people believe in fate control, the less likely they would be to use relationship as a way to influence others and the less likely they would be to rate relationship-based tactics as effective.

However, owing to the lack of an adequate theoretical framework and the long list of hypotheses to be tested, we did not generate formal hypotheses on the moderating effects, leaving the examination to be largely exploratory.

Method

Participants

The GLOBE sampling strategy was used in this study. To enhance comparability, we collected data from managers in the same three industries as GLOBE, but we also sought responses from the wider manufacturing sector, rather than limit it purely to the food processing, banking, and telecommunication industries. GLOBE included 61 cultures. Owing to limited resources, we invited 20 researchers who had participated in GLOBE (five from each continent) to collaborate. In all, 12 responded and collected the data for the study. The 12 countries included in this study provided a broad range of variability on the three national cultural dimensions selected for this study; we had countries that scored high, moderate, and low on each of the dimensions. For example, on the in-group collectivism dimension, China and India have high scores, Japan has a moderate score, and the US and New Zealand have low scores.

Summaries of the demographics of all respondents are provided in Appendix A. The total sample consisted of 1764 participants. The average age ranged from 34 to 43, with the Hong Kong managers being the youngest and the Dutch managers the oldest. The majority of the respondents were male, although females did constitute over 40% of the sample in Hong Kong, Thailand, and the US. In five countries (India, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, and the US) over 90% of the sample had university undergraduate or graduate qualifications; in only three countries (France, the Netherlands, and New Zealand) did this percentage fall below 70%. Manufacturing and financial jobs were the most reported job types. Almost half of the Hong Kong participants were from small firms (fewer than 100), but a majority of other countries were from either medium-sized (100–1000) or large firms (over 1000).[4]

Measures

Influence tactics were measured using a scenario-based questionnaire with a fixed-response format, as in the Fu and Yukl (2000) study. The use of scenarios enabled us to control for factors that have been shown to affect choices of influence tactics (Yukl, 2002). The questionnaire contained six scenarios, which were selected from a long list of scenarios provided by Chinese and American managers and developed for the Fu and Yukl (2000) study. Each scenario described an influence situation that a manager could reasonably expect to encounter at work, and the influence objective was explicitly stated. Two scenarios described a situation in which a manager needed to influence his superior, two required a manager to influence a peer manager, and the other two involved managers trying to influence their subordinates. The agent and target described in the scenario were always the same sex (male) in order to control gender effects on ratings of influence tactics. The choice of male gender also reflects the predominately male composition of most of the workplaces. The first scenario, for example, reads as follows:

> The marketing manager wants to assign a new task to one of his subordinates. The task is to conduct a survey to obtain customer opinions

about the services provided by the company. The survey is the marketing department's part of a new initiative by top management to improve customer service. The subordinate is reluctant to do the additional task because his other job responsibilities are already overwhelming.

To ensure the applicability of the scenarios in all participating nations, we asked all partners to pretest them during the pilot stage.[5] Following each scenario were 16 influence tactics tailored to the given situation. Respondents were asked to rate how effective each of the tactics would be if used for influencing the target person to accomplish the objective described in the scenario. Ratings were made on a five-point scale with anchors for each rating choice (1=completely ineffective, 5=very effective). The following tactics are among the 16 tactics tailored for the above scenario:

- Ask the subordinate to do the task as a personal favor. (Personal appeal).
- Ask a superior to help influence the subordinate to do the task. (Upward appeal).

To facilitate subsequent analyses, we factor analyzed the 16 influence tactics with a request for three factors and discarded four tactics (apprising, ingratiation, coalition, and rational persuasion using written format) that did not fit the model. The remaining items were used to form the three strategies, which were used in all the subsequent analyses. The alpha values for the overall sample were 0.85 for the relationship-based strategy, 0.81 for the persuasive strategy, and 0.72 for the assertive strategy. We also checked the reliabilities of the three influence strategy scales within each culture separately. The majority of the alpha values were above 0.70 (the range was between 0.90 and 0.64).

Social beliefs were measured on five-point scales (1=strongly disbelieve, 5=strongly believe) measuring social cynicism, reward for application, social complexity, fate control, and religiosity (Leung and Bond, in press). Each dimension was measured by five items. Examples of items included in the scale are 'Kind-hearted people are easily bullied' (social cynicism), 'One will succeed if he/she really tries' (reward for application), 'Human behavior changes with the social context' (social complexity), 'Good luck follows if one survives a disaster' (fate control), and 'Religious faith contributes to good mental health' (religiosity). The belief questionnaire was administered at the same time as the scenario-based questionnaire for influence tactics.

When running the exploratory factor analysis on the social beliefs data, we found that items that were supposed to load on social complexity were scattered among other factors with loadings below 0.40. Therefore, we deleted those items along with the social complexity dimension and obtained four clean factors corresponding to the other four dimensions. We then repeated the analysis using data from each of the 12 cultures separately, and were able to identify the same structure within each cultural group. Using the remaining 20 items to run the measurement model, we were able to find a satisfactory result as well (NNFI=0.91, CFI=0.92 and RMSEA=0.05). Given all these results, we concluded that we would not get a valid and reliable social complexity scale, and therefore dropped it from further analyses and used the four scales, labeled social cynicism, reward for application, fate control, and religiosity, for the current study.

The internal consistency reliability, as measured by Cronbach alpha values for the total sample, was 0.66 for social cynicism, 0.65 for reward for application, 0.61 for fate control, and 0.78 for religiosity. Although some alphas were below the optimal level, internal consistency seemed adequate for this type of exploratory study. For cross-cultural research on social beliefs such as this study, we use items that represent the 'core-etics' of social beliefs: that is, aspects of beliefs that can be measured across all cultures. When measuring beliefs within a cultural group, we would add emic or culture-specific items that increase the reliability of the scales (Leung and Bond, 2004, in press). As the 'core etic' scales have fewer items, low Cronbach's alphas are likely to occur and should not be a major cause of concern. Despite the lower-than-optimal reliabilities, Leung and Bond suggest that we stay with the current-etic items to maintain cross-cultural comparability until better alternatives are developed.

Cultural values data were taken from the GLOBE Project. House *et al* (1999) pointed out that the endorsement of global leader behavior dimensions is associated with 'respondent value orientation (i.e., 'should be' responses) and not with observed practices (i.e., 'as is' responses).' We therefore used 'should be' values of the three dimensions for our study. As cultural values are found to be rather stable, the fact that they were collected a few years earlier was not a concern.

Data collection

Although restriction to three GLOBE industries reduced the heterogeneity of the sample, there is still considerable variety among the companies within each industry. For the manufacturing industry, companies included steel, electronics, food, garments, and other products. For financial services, the majority of the firms were banks, and telecommunication companies comprised both traditional telecommunication and mobile phone companies in all cultures.

The original English version of the questionnaire was used in India, New Zealand, Thailand, and the United States, with minor modifications to fit local terminology and spelling. A translated version of the questionnaire was used for the remaining cultures. Consistent with the recommended procedures (Brislin, 1970), two bilingual persons familiar with the behavioral literature made the initial translation from English to the language of the country. Then a different person retranslated the questionnaire back into English. Finally, another bilingual person checked the back-translated version against the original English to ensure that they were equivalent. Any discrepancies were resolved by discussion among the researchers.

Data analyses

Given the requirement to analyze our data at two levels – individual and cultural – we used hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) (Klein and Kozlowski, 2000). HLM takes into account the individual-level error in estimating society-level coefficients. In order to model within-level as well as between-level relationships, one needs to simultaneously estimate two models: one identifying the relationship within each of the lower-level groups, and a second one to see how these within-group relationships vary between groups (Bryk and Raudenbush, 1992). In our case, the program enables us to examine how the relationship between individual-level social beliefs and preferences for influence strategies within each culture varies across cultures as a result of differences on country-level dimensions of in-group collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, and future orientation.

When selecting influence strategies, managers in the same culture are affected by their common values. Therefore, we needed to disaggregate the data so that each lower-level unit (individual manager) is assigned a score representing the higher-level unit (culture) within which it is nested. HLM has the ability to take into consideration the variance due to variables at different levels while ensuring compliance with the assumption of independence of random error at different levels (one of the assumptions in traditional regression) (see Goldstein, 1996). For our study, HLM isolates the amount of variance in influence strategies that is due to cultural values, and therefore more accurately estimates the variance due to social beliefs. Hence, it not only increases the fit between the hypothetical model and the actual situation, but also ensures a more reasonable and more accurate assessment of the relationships among the nested variables.

In running the analyses, we first estimated the null model, using the three influence strategies as three dependent variables to assess the between-group variance and within-group variance (tau): that is, to estimate how much variance in each of the three strategies is due to individual differences (social beliefs) and how much is due to cultural differences (values). Then we ran the random model to assess the relationship between Level 1 predictors (social beliefs) and Level 1 outcomes (perception of influence strategies). Finally, we ran the full model to assess the relationship between Level 2 predictors and intercepts (B_0) and slopes (B_1 to B_j) to examine whether cultural values are related to average scores on the dependent variable across different cultural groups, and to test the effect of the cultural variables on the relationship between the social beliefs and perceived effectiveness of influence strategies at the individual level.

The three cultural dimensions were added to the model only when the χ^2 value for the final variance estimation at Level 1 was statistically significant, which indicated that a significant amount of variance in the slope (i.e., the relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable at the first level) was accounted for at the second level.

Results

The means, standard deviations (s.d.), and correlations among variables used for the analyses are provided in Table 1.[6] Owing to the large sample size, many correlations between variables reach statistical significance. However, most of the correlations are small, accounting for little common variance, and therefore are not of present concern. The correlation between assertive and relationship-based influence strategies appears to be larger than other correlations, and analysis of bivariate correlations between the individual tactics constituting

Table 1 Means, s.d., and correlations among variables at the individual level (N=1764)

		1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*
1	Relationship based							
2	Persuasive	0.09**						
3	Assertive	0.52**	0.27**					
4	Social cynicism	0.23**	−0.10**	0.20**				
5	Reward for application	0.06*	0.25**	0.01	−0.02			
6	Fate control	0.19**	−0.09**	0.17**	0.19**	−0.03		
7	Religiosity	0.15**	0.06*	0.07**	0.14**	0.23**	0.16**	
Mean		1.90	3.37	2.17	3.23	3.97	2.64	3.19
s.d.		0.48	0.56	0.53	0.77	0.65	0.76	0.87

*Correlation significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed).
**Correlation significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

each of these strategies suggested overlap (r=0.45) between exchange (a component of the relationship-based strategy) and upward appeal (assertive strategy). However, based on previous literature (e.g., Sun and Bond, 2000), we regard the two to be conceptually independent.

As expected, the mean ratings of influence strategies indicate that the persuasive strategy received the highest overall ratings of effectiveness across cultures. Surprisingly, the relationship-based strategy received the lowest rating, an issue to be discussed later. The means of the three influence strategies and four scales of social beliefs by country are listed in Table 2.

Social beliefs and influence strategies

The results of the individual level analyses are reported in Table 3. The t values indicate the significance of the relationship between social beliefs and the perceived effectiveness of influence strategies at the individual level, and the χ^2 values in the last column indicate whether each individual-level relationship varies significantly across the 12 different countries.

Our model predicted several connections between individuals' social beliefs and their perceived effectiveness of influence strategies. Specifically, Hypotheses 1a and b predicted a positive relationship between social cynicism and endorsement of the assertive and relationship-based strategies. The significant coefficients in Table 3 (β=0.085and 0.108, respectively, $P<0.01$) indicate that both Hypotheses 1a and b were supported. Similarly, belief in reward for application is positively related to endorsement of the persuasive strategy (β=0.194, $P<0.001$), supporting Hypothesis 2. Religiosity is also positively related to endorsement of the relationship-based strategy (β=0.043, $P<0.01$), supporting Hypothesis 3b. Surprisingly, religiosity is not related to the perceived effectiveness of the persuasive strategy as predicted in Hypothesis 3a (β=0.010, $P>0.05$), but is positively related to the assertive strategy. Finally, belief in fate control has significant individual-level effects on endorsements of the assertive strategy (β=0.075, $P<0.05$) in support of Hypothesis 4a, but Hypothesis 4b was not supported (β=−0.017, $P>0.05$). As stated in the methods section, when we ran the factor analysis on the social beliefs scale, the items that were supposed to load on social complexity were scattered among the other factors, with loadings below 0.40. Therefore, we eliminated those items from further analyses and were unable to test Hypothesis 5, which concerned the effects of social complexity.

National cultural values and influence strategies

Next, we tested whether the effects of national cultural values on the perceived effectiveness of influence strategies varied across countries. This involved two components. We first considered the extent to which the mean effectiveness ratings varied as a function of culture. We then assessed the extent to which the relationship between social beliefs and each influence strategy varied across cultures.

The χ^2 values for the three intercepts in Table 3 were all statistically significant, indicating that the perceived effectiveness of the three types of influence strategy differed significantly from country to country. To examine how these cross-national differences in influence strategies were specifically related to national cultural values, we included the three culture-level variables (uncertainty avoidance,

Table 2 Means of influence strategies and social beliefs by countries

	China	*France*	*Hong Kong*	*India*	*Japan*	*Mexico*	*Netherlands*	*New Zealand*	*Taiwan*	*Thailand*	*Turkey*	*United States of America*
N	156	184	109	184	118	181	155	187	129	152	106	103
Assertive	2.07 (0.44)	2.43 (0.57)	2.28 (0.54)	2.26 (0.58)	2.34 (0.48)	2.07 (0.52)	2.05 (0.47)	1.79 (0.31)	2.24 (0.51)	2.34 (0.5)	2.03 (0.52)	2.19 (0.57)
Persuasive	2.82 (0.5)	3.66 (0.47)	3.17 (0.45)	3.56 (0.49)	3.47 (0.47)	3.18 (0.77)	3.42 (0.43)	3.49 (0.3)	3.15 (0.52)	3.42 (0.49)	3.67 (0.51)	3.47 (0.53)
Relationship based	2.04 (0.47)	1.86 (0.45)	1.92 (0.44)	2 (0.55)	1.65 (0.47)	1.95 (0.48)	1.74 (0.4)	1.77 (0.3)	2.11 (0.5)	1.97 (0.54)	1.84 (0.43)	2.02 (0.57)
Social cynicism	3.28 (0.61)	3.36 (0.77)	3.5 (0.53)	3.41 (0.74)	3.01 (0.62)	3.46 (0.74)	2.82 (0.64)	2.64 (0.81)	3.51 (0.62)	3.74 (0.6)	2.95 (0.81)	3.1 (0.77)
Reward for application	3.81 (0.66)	3.89 (0.68)	3.71 (0.65)	4.42 (0.49)	3.77 (0.63)	4.18 (0.61)	3.79 (0.6)	3.79 (0.51)	3.74 (0.65)	4.23 (0.51)	4.2 (0.67)	3.95 (0.72)
Fate control	2.76 (0.66)	2.51 (0.72)	2.7 (0.75)	2.68 (0.74)	2.75 (0.59)	2.29 (0.94)	2.65 (0.6)	2.16 (0.62)	3.39 (0.57)	2.89 (0.76)	2.74 (0.62)	2.55 (0.7)
Religiosity	2.59 (0.67)	2.69 (0.94)	3.19 (0.78)	3.83 (0.81)	2.8 (0.67)	3.64 (0.84)	2.82 (0.78)	2.95 (0.7)	3.46 (0.52)	3.55 (0.57)	3.29 (0.93)	3.63 (0.78)

s.d. within parenthesis

in-group collectivism, and future orientation) in the full model, and ran the analyses using the grand centering scheme. Table 4 reports the results from the second-level analyses (organized by type of influence strategy). According to the R^2 changes observed, the inclusion of the three cultural dimensions in the full model accounted for 40% of the variance in the country mean scores for the rated effectiveness of the persuasive strategy, 37% for the relationship-based strategy, and 21% for the assertive strategy (see Table 4). The following paragraph discusses the ability of the cultural dimensions to explain the significant cross-cultural variations.

Hypotheses 6–9 predicted specific connections between national cultural values and the perceived effectiveness of influence strategies. According to Hypotheses 6a–c, managers in higher uncertainty avoidance cultures would be more likely to rate the relationship-based and assertive strategies as effective and the persuasive strategy as ineffective compared with those in lower uncertainty avoidance cultures. The results in Table 4 indicate that Hypotheses 6a and c were supported. Managers from countries high on uncertainty avoidance gave higher ratings to items constituting the relationship-based strategy and lower ratings to the persuasive influence strategy. This can be seen in Table 4: uncertainty avoidance was found to be significantly related to the mean ratings of relationship-based and persuasive influence strategies (G=0.138 and −0.238, respectively, $P<0.05$). Hypothesis 6b, however, was not supported because uncertainty avoidance did not influence ratings of the assertive strategy (G=0.051, $P>0.05$). Hypothesis 7 was also supported: managers in collectivistic cultures rated the relationship-based influence strategy as more effective (G=0.071, $P<0.05$). Finally, Hypotheses 8a and b predicted that managers in future-oriented cultures would be more likely to rate the relationship-based strategy as effective and the assertive strategy as ineffective: the coefficients in Table 4 indicate that these hypotheses were not supported (G=−0.111 and −0.044, respectively, $P>0.05$).

Interactions between cultural values and social beliefs

Cynicism and religiosity predicted ratings of influence strategies in a consistent manner across all cultures, as indicated by the non-significant χ^2 values in the last column of Table 3. In contrast, the significant χ^2 values for fate control and reward for application suggest that the effect of these beliefs

Table 3 Relationships between social beliefs and influence strategies

Influence strategies	*Coefficient*	*s.e.*	*t-value*	*Variance*	χ^2 *(d.f.=11)*
Persuasive					
Intercept	3.372	0.069	48.94***	0.0605	444.06***
Social cynicism	−0.027	0.017	−1.55	0.0012	13.51
Reward for application	0.194	0.026	7.46***	0.0055	23.58*
Fate control	−0.017	0.022	−0.79	0.0035	25.58**
Religiosity	0.010	0.019	0.51	0.0028	16.91
Assertive					
Intercept	2.174	0.049	44.19***	0.0300	239.47***
Social cynicism	0.085	0.022	3.94**	0.0031	16.95
Reward for application	−0.003	0.020	−0.13	0.0024	13.22
Fate control	0.075	0.029	2.56*	0.0077	29.53**
Religiosity	0.030	0.014	2.21*	0.0002	9.32
Relationship based					
Intercept	1.905	0.038	50.46***	0.0172	142.37***
Social cynicism	0.108	0.018	5.87***	0.0023	14.22
Reward for application	0.026	0.031	0.85	0.0093	33.94***
Fate control	0.095	0.025	3.81**	0.0061	24.93**
Religiosity	0.043	0.013	3.36**	0.0005	7.02

*$P<0.05$; **$P<0.01$; ***$P<0.001$.

on influence strategies varied significantly across the 12 countries. For example, belief in reward for application was not significantly related to endorsement of relationship-based strategies at the individual level, but the same relationship was significantly different at the societal level. In a similar manner, the effect of belief in fate control on persuasive strategies was non-significant at the individual level, but varied significantly across cultures. Finally, belief in fate control had significant individual-level effects on endorsements of assertive and relationship-based strategies, and both relationships varied significantly across cultures.

To examine the cultural moderating effect, we did follow-up analyses where social belief significantly affects the perceived effectiveness of the influence strategy, as indicated by the χ^2 value (see Table 4). The results in Table 4 show that, together, the three cultural dimensions accounted for 51% of the variance in the relationship between beliefs in fate control and the assertive strategy, and 48% of the variance in the relationship between fate control and the relationship-based strategy, reducing the significant χ^2 values in the random model to non-significance in the full model (from $\chi^2_{(11)}=29.53$, $P<0.001$ to $\chi^2_{(8)}=14.73$, n.s., and from $\chi^2_{(11)}=24.93$, $P<0.001$ to $\chi^2_{(8)}=12.29$, n.s., respectively: see Tables 3 and 4). In other words, in societies that are future-oriented, and high on in-group collectivism and uncertainty avoidance, people believing in fate control are more likely to use assertive and relationship-based influence strategies.

None of the three cultural dimensions had a statistically significant moderating effect on the relationship between belief in reward for application and the persuasive strategy. However, together, the inclusion of the three dimensions in the model explained an amount of variance sufficient to reduce the unexplained variance due to cultural differences at the individual level to non-significant levels at the cultural level ($\chi^2_{(11)}=23.58$, $P<0.05$ in the random model, becoming $\chi^2_{(8)}=11.06$, NS in the full model).

Discussion

There is a long-standing debate between the universalists and the culturalists in the cross-cultural research community with regard to whether social phenomena in different contexts are becoming similar (convergence) or dissimilar (divergence) (e.g., Hofstede, 2001). This study examines the relationship among three types of phenomenon: perceived effectiveness of influence strategies, individuals' social beliefs, and cultural values with respondents from 12 cultures. Our findings suggest that the perceived effectiveness of influence strategies can be affected by both micro-level variables (individual social beliefs) and macro-level variables

Table 4 Effect of cultural variables on influence strategy ratings, and on the relationships between social beliefs and influence strategies

Effect of cultural variables	*Coeff.*	*s.e.*	*t-ratio*	*Variance*	*R^2 change*	*χ^2 (d.f.=8)*
For persuasive influence						
On mean persuasive influence				0.0361	40.3	213.19***
Future orientation	0.286	0.145	1.98			
In-group collectivism	0.037	0.067	0.56			
Uncertainty avoidance	−0.238	0.093	2.57*			
On relationship with reward for application				0.0026	—	11.06
Future orientation	0.131	0.059	2.20			
In-group collectivism	0.060	0.029	2.07			
Uncertainty avoidance	−0.008	0.038	−0.20			
On relationship with fate control				0.0044	—	20.85**
Future orientation	−0.071	0.066	1.08			
In-group collectivism	−0.032	0.029	1.10			
Uncertainty avoidance	0.023	0.044	0.52			
For assertive influence						
On mean assertive influence				0.0236	21.3	134.61***
Future orientation	−0.044	0.106	−0.41			
In-group collectivism	0.121	0.023	5.24***			
Uncertainty avoidance	0.051	0.045	1.14			
On relationship with fate control				0.0038	50.6	14.73
Future orientation	0.104	0.022	4.75**			
In-group collectivism	0.035	0.009	4.04**			
Uncertainty avoidance	−0.124	0.021	5.93***			
For relation-based influence						
On mean relation-based influence				0.0108	37.2	77.36***
Future orientation	−0.111	0.065	1.73			
In-group collectivism	0.071	0.027	2.61*			
Uncertainty avoidance	0.138	0.042	3.26*			
On relationship with reward for application				0.0091	—	25.02**
Future orientation	−0.058	0.087	−0.67			
In-group collectivism	−0.015	0.041	−0.36			
Uncertainty avoidance	0.094	0.056	1.70			
On relationship with fate control				0.0032	47.5	12.29
Future orientation	0.081	0.060	1.36			
In-group collectivism	0.053	0.028	1.90			
Uncertainty avoidance	−0.097	0.040	2.43*			

***$P<0.001$; **$P<0.01$; *$P<0.05$.
R^2 change: the percentage of variance reduced by adding predictors in the full model over random model.

(national cultural values). A summary of the results is presented in Table 5. We did identify a strong pan-cultural relationship between managers' individual social beliefs and their perception of the effectiveness of different types of influence strategy. In addition, without aiming to identify cultural specifics, this study explicitly recognized both the direct and moderating effects of cultural values on the respondents' perceptions of the effectiveness of influence strategies. Culture mattered even when universal patterns were found, because differences between groups did exist. Our findings support the cross-vergence perspective (Ralston *et al*., 1997), and indicate that the influence processes appear to be relatively similar across cultures but not the same.

Social beliefs and influence strategies

Our hypotheses predicted specific connections between individuals' social beliefs and choice of influence strategies. In support of our hypotheses, endorsement of social cynicism was connected to higher-rated effectiveness of the assertive strategy. Similarly, cynicism was linked to the relationship-based strategy, suggesting that managers holding more cynical beliefs prefer both strategies more, as

Table 5 Summarized results of hypothesis testing and exploratory analyses

	Strategies	*Direction predicted*	*Result*
Results of hypothesis testing			
H1 Social cynicism	(a) Assertive	+	Supported
	(b) Relationship-based	+	Supported
H2 Reward for application	(a) Persuasive	+	Supported
H3 Religiosity	(a) Persuasive	+	Not supported
	(b) Relationship-based	+	Supported
H4 Fate control	(a) Assertive	+	Supported
	(b) Persuasive	–	Not supported
H5 Social complexity	(a) Assertive		Not tested
	(b) Persuasive		Not tested
	(c) Relationship-based		Not tested
Cultural values			
H6 Uncertainty avoidance	(a) Relationship-based	+	Supported
	(b) Assertive	+	Not supported
	(c) Persuasive	–	Supported
H7 In-group collectivism	(a) Relationship-based	+	Supported
H8 Future orientation	(a) Relationship-based	+	Not supported
	(b)Assertive	–	Not supported
Cultural values	*Moderating effect on*		*Direction of effect*
Results of exploratory analyses			
Future orientation	Fate control → Assertive		+
In-group collectivism	Fate control → Assertive		+
	Fate control → Assertive		–
Uncertainty avoidance	Fate control → Relationship-based		–

they distrust rational appeals and believe that others act out of self-interest.

Our results also suggest that effectiveness rating of the persuasive strategy is best predicted by beliefs in reward for application. That is to say, managers believing that effort will lead to positive results rated persuasive strategies as more likely to be effective. Such managers are therefore more likely to consult with the target in planning a change or activity, and marshal logical arguments and factual evidence to show the relevance of the request to organizational objectives. This reasoned approach is consistent with their belief that just procedures work best.

One unexpected finding was the link between belief in religiosity and higher ratings for assertive influence tactics. Previous research has shown that a higher level of religiosity is associated with a greater acceptance of restrictions in the civic and political realm (Keung and Bond, 2002). Perhaps the connection between religiosity and the higher-rated effectiveness of assertive strategies may occur because of the higher conservatism of spiritual persons and their greater acceptance of authoritative social control. Another unexpected finding was the relationship between beliefs in fate control and higher ratings for relationship-based strategies, perhaps because such individuals may believe that events are predetermined and they cannot influence outcomes through rational persuasion or other tactics relying on internal choice by individuals.

National cultural values and influence strategies

Similar to previous research (Kennedy *et al*., 2003; van Knippenberg and van Knippenberg, 2003), the persuasive strategy received the highest ratings of effectiveness in absolute mean terms. An interesting finding, however, was that the relationship-based strategy was rated the lowest; perhaps tactics such as giving gifts, socializing, and making personal appeals are not effective because such behavior could be perceived as outside the role of the manager, and may even be considered inappropriate in certain situations and in many cultural groups. The cross-cultural variations identified in this study occur within this general framework of the higher effectiveness of the persuasive strategy

and the lower effectiveness of the relationship-based strategy. Thus, although managers from high uncertainty avoidance cultures gave lower ratings to persuasive strategies than those from low uncertainty avoidance cultures, they still perceived the persuasive influence strategy to be more effective than the relationship-based strategy.

As hypothesized, people in high uncertainty avoidance cultures were least likely to perceive the persuasive strategy as effective. In such cultures, the roles and responsibilities of the target as well as of the agent are subject to considerable structure. Rules and instructions provide for high levels of orderliness, often at the cost of experimentation and innovation. Such structures make it easier for the influence target to determine whether the request is legitimate, consistent with role requirements, and in support of organizational objectives, thereby undermining the potential role of rational persuasion, one component of the persuasive strategy.

Interestingly, people in high uncertainty avoidance cultures endorsed the relationship-oriented strategy rather than the assertive strategy. That is to say, in cultures high on uncertainty avoidance, managers gave higher effectiveness ratings to the relationship-based strategy than did managers from lower uncertainty avoidance cultures. It appears that, given the clarity of the task requirements, managers in high uncertainty avoidance countries are more willing to rely on the use of informal rapport-building, gift-giving, and exchange in order to shape the task priorities of the influence target, because these relationship-based tactics offer them more assurance and comfort. Connecting this line of reasoning to the research on substitutes for leadership (Kerr and Jermier, 1978), we can argue that the presence of greater structure acts as a substitute (or even a neutralizer) for instrumental leadership, resulting in a greater focus on relationship-oriented leadership.

Similar to House *et al*'s (1999) finding that collectivism measured at both the societal and organizational level accounted for significant variation in the endorsement of team-oriented leadership, managers from cultures high on in-group collectivism gave higher effectiveness ratings to the relationship-based strategy than their counterparts from cultures low on in-group collectivism. Unexpectedly, collectivism was also linked to the assertive strategy. The components of the assertive strategy are inimical to effective team cohesion (e.g., use of demands, threats, persistent reminders, or appeals to higher authorities), and hence should be perceived as less effective by managers socialized by collective family traditions. However, cultural collectivism is also associated with greater hierarchy in interpersonal relationships, and assertion is less sanctioned in hierarchical systems (Bond *et al*., 1985). There are fewer normative constraints against using coercive controls in such systems.

Interactions between social beliefs and national cultural values

We also examined the interactions between cultural values and social beliefs in terms of their effect on the perceived effectiveness of the three types of influence strategy. Two of the social beliefs – social cynicism and religiosity – predicted the perceived effectiveness of influence strategies in a consistent manner across cultures. This finding lends support to the potential use of such individual beliefs, in preference to existing cultural value schemas, as a more fine-grained means for predicting and explaining observed differences in individual behavior across different cultural groupings. In contrast, the strength of the effect of reward for application on the assertive and relationship-based influence strategies varied significantly across cultures.

As discussed above, mean ratings of tactics within the relationship-based strategy were higher for managers from cultures high on uncertainty avoidance. We argue that the existence of high levels of value structures in such societies reduced the perceived freedom of individual agents to influence the nature of the influence attempt (e.g., through consultation). At the individual level, beliefs in fate control may act in a similar manner. Managers from cultures low on uncertainty avoidance (who may have more freedom in their influence attempts) may also adopt relationship-based strategies to the extent that they believe in fate control, that is, that events are predetermined, that individual agency is limited, and that people cannot influence outcomes using tactics such as rational persuasion, consultation, or collaboration.

Although we did not hypothesize any moderating effects, our exploratory examination showed that future orientation and in-group collectivism strengthen the relationship between beliefs in fate control and perceived effectiveness of assertive strategies, whereas uncertainty avoidance weakens it. As mentioned earlier, in long-term relationship-oriented cultures, managers believing in fate control are more likely to use assertive strategies because they would trust a third person or higher

authority to influence the target rather than themselves since, believing in fate, they are less likely to think that their individual actions can directly influence the target, that is, by persuasion. The interactional effect of high future orientation may be due to the concept of *delayed gratification*. Managers who believe in fate control in the context of a future-oriented society may assert their influence more autocratically because rewards will come in the future; by contrast, in societies low on future orientation, managers may place more emphasis on the process of ensuring individual happiness and involvement now, rather than later.

It is interesting to see that managers endorsing fate control in a society high on uncertainty avoidance are less likely to perceive the relationship-based strategy as being effective. This result shows that, when individuals do not have a high sense of security, those believing in fate control would tend to rely more on fate rather than rely on the relationship they have with the target when trying to influence the target.

Limitations and implications for future research

Unlike most previous studies on influence tactics, our study included cultures from all four continents and used a comprehensive set of influence tactics. Our scenario-based approach enabled us to control the effect of some of the external variables, such as the direction and nature of the request, and the gender of the target. The consistent factor loadings of the belief and influence items across the 12 cultural groups showed that we were able to identify conceptually similar constructs with probable universal status. Also, we brought into the analyses measures of cultural values, and used HLM to examine statistically the effect of these values on the relationship between social beliefs and perceived effectiveness of influence strategies.

However, the study is not free from limitations. Our model was based on the theory of reasoned action and the theory of planned behavior. These theories suggest that attitudes are more likely to be congruent with behavioral intentions to the extent that beliefs salient at the time of attitude assessment are also salient when plans are formulated and executed. Equivalence of salient beliefs is more likely under the controlled or reasoned mode of behavior, which occurs when people are sufficiently motivated and have the required time and resources; it is less likely under the automatic or spontaneous mode, in which people are more susceptible to situational forces that can differ from occurrence to occurrence. Although Greenwald and Banaji (1995) argued that beliefs and attitudes can guide behavior without conscious awareness of any kind, it is possible that our model connecting social beliefs and influence behavior may be more likely to occur under the controlled or reasoned mode of behavior, an issue that needs to be investigated in future research. Moreover, the theory is most predictive when the behavior is under the actor's volitional control. In the scenarios, the fictitious actor (e.g., marketing manager) may not have available the necessary resources (e.g., power, skills, and support from a third party) to decide at will to perform or not to perform a certain tactic regardless of how effective the tactic is perceived to be.

The scenarios measure only a respondent's perceptions about tactic effectiveness, not their actual use of tactics. Although empirical studies have shown that, under certain circumstances, attitudes can be used to predict behavior (see Jaccard, 1981), the nature of this relationship needs further research. One particularly interesting avenue would be to investigate situations where managers may need to make a trade-off between expected effectiveness and the acceptability of a tactic within a culture. Such speculation raises further considerations regarding the criteria used to determine 'effectiveness' in different cultures. In our questionnaire, the effectiveness rating was based on the likelihood of the target carrying out the requested action. Although this is an important part of 'effectiveness', other components (such as maintenance or enhancement of the relationship between influencer and target) are likely to vary in importance across cultures. Research into cross-cultural variations in the criteria for successful influence is likely to provide important insights into the selection and use of different influence tactics.

Our finding of a consistent across-cultures relationship between ratings of influence strategy effectiveness and two social beliefs (social cynicism and religiosity) is interesting, and warrants further research. Investigation in other behavioral areas (e.g., negotiation, leadership, or team processes) will help clarify the extent to which these social beliefs act consistently across diverse cultures. Exploration of the reasons why relationships involving these two beliefs are not moderated by culture will provide further insights into the interplay between individual and cultural constructs.

Collapsing multiple influence tactics into three broad strategies created parsimony, which made the

analyses manageable and served the purposes of our research, but at the cost of reduced richness of the information. Trade-offs between generalizabilty, accuracy, and simplicity are hard to balance (Weick, 1979). The level of correlation we identified between the relationship and assertiveness strategies also indicates the need to further improve measurement of these constructs. Two tactics (ingratiation, coalition formation) that have been prominent in past research had to be excluded from the influence strategies because they did not fit into the culturally comparable framework determined by the factor analysis. A more fine-grained study of specific tactics would assist in applications such as executive training. For example, the persuasive strategy demonstrated the greatest variability across the 12 cultures, and further research could profitably focus on cross-cultural variation in the individual tactics constituting this strategy (rational persuasion, inspirational appeal, and consultation).

Despite the fact that phenomena in and around organizations occur inherently at multiple levels, organizational scientists often risk biases of misspecification. A methodological fallacy occurs when data available from one level are applied to another level without being statistically accommodated. An ecological fallacy is committed when, for example, group (e.g., society) level data are disaggregated to form variables at the individual level and investigations are made at this lower level, whereas a reverse ecological fallacy is committed when data at the individual level are aggregated to construct group indices for higher-level analysis (e.g., Hofstede *et al*., 1993; Hofstede, 2001). We tried to avoid these fallacies through our statistical techniques, which allowed us to conduct both individual-level analyses and the second-level analyses that included cultural values. Thus we were able to examine how the relationship between individual-level social beliefs and preferences for influence strategies within each culture vary across cultures as a result of differences in country-level dimensions of cultural values.

As we collected data from 12 different countries, the issue of demographic differences across the samples arises. A recent study has highlighted the role of personality in choice of influence tactics (Cable and Judge, 2003), and other personal and demographic differences may affect influence behavior. We were interested in focusing on the influence of only one macro-level factor – national cultural values – but note that our samples were not all equivalent on key demographic variables (e.g., gender, education). Although our findings are robust in the face of these differences, future research could usefully explore the extent to which such variables influence both social beliefs and preferences for choice of influence strategy across cultures.

In order to avoid potential common method variance problems, we chose to use the GLOBE (House *et al*., 1999) values for cultural variables. These measures came from different samples, collected some years prior to our study. The ability of these values to explain cross-cultural variation in influence strategies is therefore a demanding test. In the House study, culture variables measured at the organizational level were found to explain more variance (in preferred leader behaviors) than societal cultural variables. In our study we used only societal-level measures of culture, and their ability to explain variance both in mean ratings of strategies, and in the relationship between individual beliefs and strategy ratings, is particularly impressive.

In the interests of parsimony, we used previous research to select three cultural dimensions to include in our model. The three cultural variables we selected, however, did not explain all of the cultural differences in our data. Adoption of the more fine-grained study of tactics recommended earlier could be combined with identification of additional cultural measures relevant to the choice of influence tactic. For example, a case could potentially be made for the inclusion of other cultural values such as power distance. We chose not to include this cultural dimension in our study, however, for two reasons. First, previous researchers (e.g., Kennedy *et al*., 2003) have concluded that in-group collectivism can account for more unique variation, as well as capture much of the variance explained by power distance. Hence we included only in-group collectivism, and not power distance, in our study. In addition, we believe that power distance may be more useful in distinguishing the use of influence strategies across targets within cultures. For example, people in high power difference cultures may be more likely to use assertive strategies when influencing subordinates, but may use other strategies when influencing superiors. In contrast, people in low power distance cultures may not vary their use of influence strategies by position of the target. As we were not examining the connection between influence strategies and target position, we did not include power distance in our model. We included only cultural

dimensions such as in-group collectivism, future orientation, and uncertainty avoidance, which we believed would affect tactics irrespective of the hierarchical position of the target. We recommend, however, that future researchers extend this study by including power distance and varying the position of the target of the influence strategy. Extension of the sample to include more countries, with greater representation from all cultural clusters, would also facilitate the identification of the effects of more cultural variables. Such research will enable us to develop an even better understanding of the way in which individual managers' beliefs and their cultural contexts interact in order to determine the effectiveness of influence tactics in the workplace.

Several other lines of research can be developed from our model. Although we do not focus on the long-term impact of influence strategies, the effectiveness of an influence attempt will be determined not by one interaction, but by the cumulative effect of having used numerous strategies and their sequencing. Further research is needed to examine the effect of different sequences of different types of influence tactics across cultures.

Implications for organizations

The findings of this study have several implications for managers and organizations. Organizational interactions, especially intercultural ones, can result in miscommunication and conflict. This conflict is often escalated, not only by differences in cultural styles (or influence styles), but also by people's ignorance of such differences. People tend to react negatively to behavior that appears to deviate from their own norms and standards, and accurate perception is often impaired because of people's tendencies to interpret others' behavior from their own perspective. An understanding of influence styles across cultures can be useful in organizational leadership, team management, and numerous other situations. For example, people who believe in reward for application might perceive assertive influence strategies as 'pushy' and relationship-based strategies as inappropriate for the workplace. The use of inappropriate styles might not only result in the influence attempt being ineffective, but might also backfire in the form of increased conflict.

Such conflict can be managed in organizations by training organizational leaders and managers to be aware of different perceptions of influence styles across cultures, and to recognize that their own preferred styles might not be effective with all employees. Managers and leaders who have a good understanding of the various types of effective influence strategy as well as the conditions under which such strategies are effective are more likely to be successful in their influence attempts. Therefore, it could be important for managers to have knowledge of the influence strategies that are effective across cultures, as well as to understand the strategies that are relevant to specific cultures.

Leadership training programs in organizations, especially training programs for managers on overseas assignments, could ensure that the managers are knowledgeable about and skilled in the use of multiple influence strategies. It might be important to keep in mind that the results of this study found the persuasive influence strategy to be the most effective and the relationship-based strategy to be the least effective across cultures. Perhaps managers skilled in rational persuasion, inspirational appeal, and consultation are more likely to be effective at influencing others, in general, than managers who use influence tactics such as making personal appeals, offering gifts, and socializing with the target.

Another interesting implication of our study is that it suggests a move away from the traditional cross-cultural training in leadership and negotiations toward training individuals to respond to different targets by focusing on differences in social beliefs rather than cultural differences in values. Managers and leaders who are knowledgeable about the relationship between different social beliefs and influence strategies can be more effective in their influence behavior. In addition, a clear understanding of their own social beliefs could help managers understand the reasons underlying their use of and comfort with specific influence strategies.

Conclusion

Although a lot of research effort has been put into studying determinants of influence tactics, this is the first time that social beliefs have been included as a determinant. One unique contribution of our paper is the finding that social beliefs are a useful pan-cultural predictor of the effectiveness ratings of influence strategies by managers in different cultures. The finding has significant implications for cross-cultural research on influence and leadership, in that it suggests a move away from macro-level cultural variables and towards micro-level individual factors. In essence, social beliefs help us provide a more fine-grained analysis of influence

strategies compared with previous research, and allow us to develop empirically grounded models of individual social behavior across cultures (Smith and Bond, 2003).

This study is also the first empirical test of the relationships between cultural values and perceived effectiveness of influence strategies. Prior studies discussed the effect of cultural values on influence tactics but did not directly assess them. We not only illustrated the utility of cultural values in explaining significant variance in the rated effectiveness of influence tactics across cultures but also showed that cultural values can serve as moderators of the effects of social beliefs on perception of influence strategies in different cultures. What emerges is a rich and complex picture of the nature of the relationship between cultural values, social beliefs, and influence strategies.

Acknowledgements

This research project was made possible by funding from the Research Grants Council of the Hong Kong SAR (1999/2000 CUHK4050/99H). We would like to express their appreciation to the following individuals: to Professor Arie Y Lewin, JIBS Editor in Chief, and Danielle T Trojan, JIBS Managing Editor, for their thoughtful directions and help during the review process; to three JIBS reviewers, for their detailed comments and suggestions for improving the manuscript; and to Liu Jun for his help with the analyses of the data. A preliminary report of this project was presented at the Academy of Management Conference in Washington DC, August 2001.

Notes

[1]Three influence strategies (persuasive, assertive, and relationship based) were obtained by collapsing 16 proactive influence tactics (see Sun and Bond, 2000; Lee and Sweeney, 2001) in a pilot study to refer to a higher level of generality than the specific tactics for the purpose of the study (see Methods section for the details). Most of the 16 tactics were identified by previous studies (e.g., Kipnis *et al*., 1980; Kipnis and Schmidt, 1982; Yukl and Tracey, 1992; Yukl *et al*., 1995; Fu and Yukl, 2000).

[2]The nine cultural dimensions developed by Project GLOBE are: (1) uncertainty avoidance, (2) power distance, (3) societal emphasis on collectivism, (4) in-group collectivism, (5) gender egalitarianism, (6) assertiveness, (7) future orientation, (8) performance orientation, and (9) humane orientation.

[3]We decided to restrict our investigation to three cultural dimensions so as to increase the power of our statistical analyses. We examined the existing literature on influence behavior to ascertain which dimensions of national culture would have the strongest theoretical and empirical support, and used our judgment to identify those dimensions that we felt could be best connected to both influence strategies and social beliefs. A case could be made for including other variables, and power distance is a leading example. Kennedy *et al*. (2003) identified the role of both power distance and in-group collectivism in distinguishing between patterns of influence tactics across countries, and concluded that in-group collectivism accounted for more unique variance (as well as capturing much of the variance explained by power distance). We therefore included in-group collectivism in preference to power distance. As stated in our Discussion section, we recommend that future researchers examine other countries and expand our model to include additional cultural dimensions.

[4]Countries were not all equivalent across demographic variables such as age, gender, and education. However, there were no significant gender differences on any of the social belief or influence strategy variables. The largest correlation with a demographic variable was between education and reward for application ($r=-0.14$, $P<0.001$), but controlling for education did not affect the positive relationship between reward for application and endorsement of the persuasive strategy (H2). Therefore, for the sake of parsimony, we excluded demographic variables from the analyses reported in the results section.

[5]In our pilot study, coauthors in the 12 participating cultures were asked to use the scenarios as exercises in MBA classes or executive leadership training programs, recording participants' answers to the open-ended question: 'What tactics would be effective in influencing the target person to … (influence purpose tailored to the situation)?' Responses relevant to the scenario were all listed together and sent to the first author. There were several hundred tactics when the lists from several cultures were combined. Two of the authors went through the lists and coded the items to make sure that we had obtained a relatively comprehensive set of tactics. No 'unique' tactic was encountered, but a few of the responses prompt our decision to include 'socializing' as a new tactic. Our final choice of the 16 tactics thus combines an *imposed-etic* component, using tactics previously identified in (predominately) American research, with an *emic* component generated by researchers within each country to yield a *derived-etic* measure.

[6]To check the effect of possible country-level response biases, we followed Triandis' (1995) suggestion and

standardized responses to all items within individuals before composing the scales. We then used the standardized scores to make up the influence strategy scales. The patterns of results for raw scores and the standardized scores were very similar. Given the equivalence of results, and the greater ease of interpretation of raw score analysis, we report the analyses based on raw scores.

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Appendix A

See Table A1.

Table A1 Demographic characteristics for participating countries[c]

Countries	*Age*	*Males*	*Education*[a]	*Job type*[b]	*Industry*	*Firm size*	*Level (H/M/L)*
China	35.8	75.2	2	1	1	2	26/63/11
(*N*=156)			65.8	29.1	72.4	40.1	
France	42.4	69.6	1	4	1	1	4/68/28
(*N*=184)			35.2	21.4	35.9	44.3	
Hong Kong[c]	34.4	58.1	2	4	1	1	26/55/19
(*N*=109)			59.6	21.7	35.6	46.8	
India	37.3	92.3	2	3	2	3	31/59/11
(*N*=184)			51.1	27.5	44	62.9	
Japan	42.3	99.1	2	4	1	(Missing)	40/48/13
(*N*=118)			79.7	50	52.5		
Mexico	35.9	65.6	2	1	2	1, 3	54/39/7
(*N*=181)			69.6	26.5	55.2	41	
Netherlands	42.7	88.8	3	1	4	2	6/46/48
(*N*=155)			40.4	52.5	59.4	49	
New Zealand	42.4	71.9	2	3	1	2	21/47/32
(*N*=187)			51.9	29.1	61.3	38.6	
Taiwan	39.6	81.4	2	3	1	3	30/44/25
(*N*=129)			74.2	33.3	46.5	48.8	
Thailand	35.8	58.7	2	2, 4	1	2	35/45/20
(*N*=152)			48.3	17.5	42.5	44.4	
Turkey	36.6	66.7	2	4	4	2	13/69/18
(*N*=106)			52.4	26.9	58.5	52.5	
United States	36.6	54.9	2	4	2	2	11/80/10
(*N*=103)			81.4	34	56.3	46.7	

[a]With the exception of age (where the mean is reported), the statistic reported is the percentage for the most frequently noted response category, coded as follows: *education* – (1) post-graduate, (2) university or equivalent, (3) high school or equivalent, and (4) below high school.
[b]*Job type* – (1) general administration, (2) finance, (3) production/manufacturing/operations management, and (4) sales management; *industry* – (1) manufacturing, (2) financial services, (3) telecommunications, and (4) other; *firm size* – (1) less than 100, (2) 100–1000, and (3) over 1000. Responses where more than one job type was endorsed have been excluded from the percentage calculation.
[c]Although not a separate country, Hong Kong's different developmental trajectory argues for its inclusion as a sample separate from China.

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Accepted by Arie Lewin, Editor in Chief, 6 April 2004. This paper has been with the author for one revision.